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CHAPTER XXIX.

Marital Relations, and Causes that Limit Population.

THE laws of marriage in the Ainu country are not very stringent; in fact, there are no laws. If a young man takes a fancy to a pretty hairy maid, and the maid reciprocates his affections, all they have to do is to go and live together, and there is no Mrs. Grundy to be scandalised at the want of closer forms and ceremonies. There is no function to celebrate the occasion; there are no wedding presents, no bridesmaids, no officiating clergyman, and no old slipper flung after the happy pair as soon as the knot is tied. The bridegroom either goes to live in his bride's hut, or, if he does not care for his mother-in-law, he will bring his lady-love to his own father's hut. Usually, however, the two, especially if their respective families are large, prefer to build a hut of their own. The honeymoon is spent in house-building, and while the bride carries the loads of timber and long reeds, the bridegroom accomplishes the more difficult task of putting them together as well as he can for future shelter. All goes well with the happy couple until the roof has to be lifted up bodily and perched on the forked poles, during which process "family rows" generally begin. But they do not last long, and when the house is finished, though not decorated, home peace reigns within, and the bridegroom, as we have already seen, proceeds to ornament his chief treasure—his wife—with tattoos on her arms. This idyllic state of things is not specially permanent, for soon after this first marriage the Ainu feels that he would like another wife, and, without thinking twice about it, he

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